

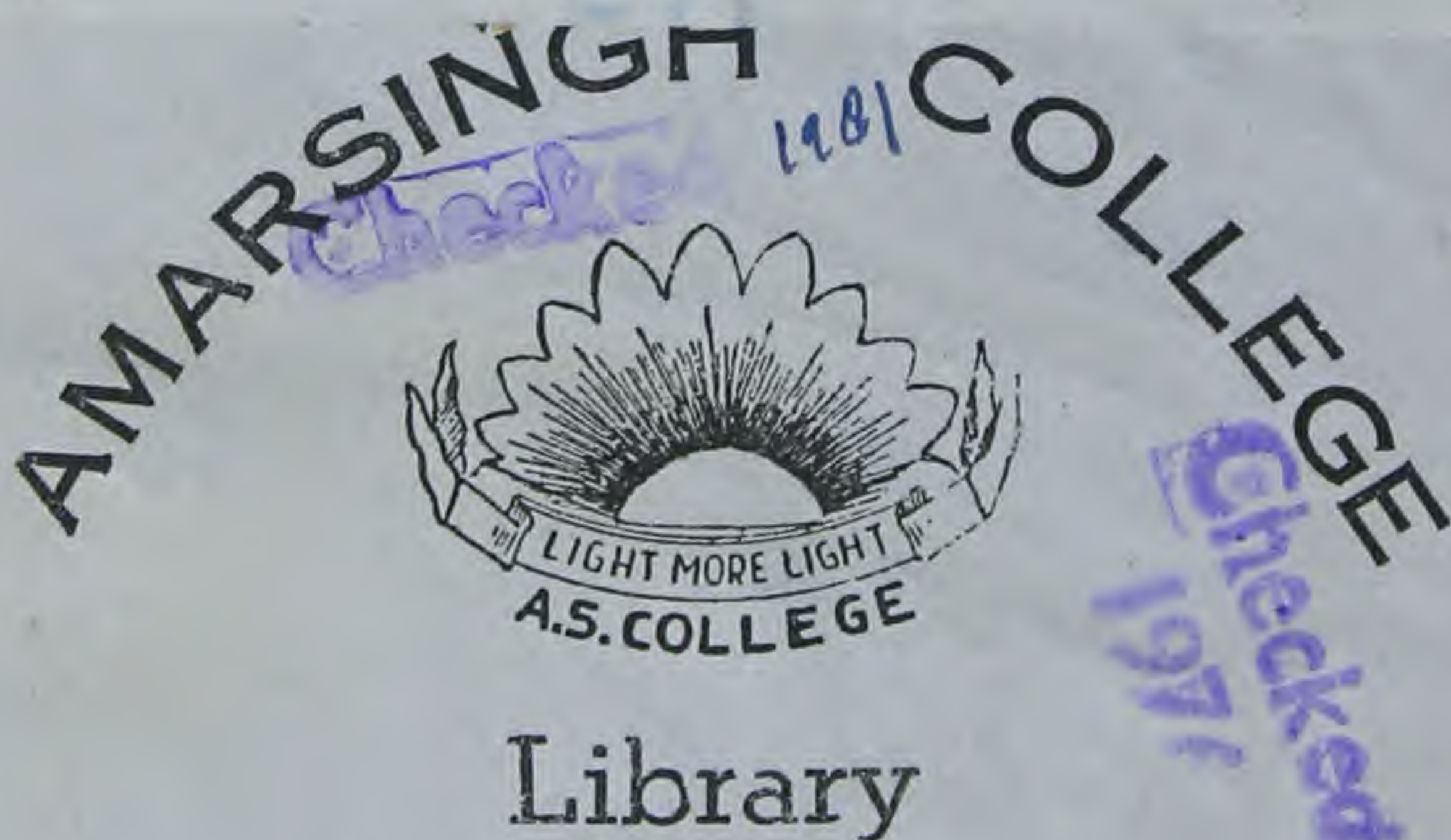
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TO THE READER

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SELECTED POEMS

WORDSWORTH

*The Retsch
Henry Vaughan*

*Plat 4
Pythagoras
B.E.*

**Ode : Intimations of Immortality from Recollections
of Early Childhood**

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
Turn whereso'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare ;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair ;
The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

IO

B

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound

20

As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief ;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong :

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep ;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay ;

30

Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday ; —
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy !

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make ; I see

The heaven laugh with you in your jubilee ;

My heart is at your festival,

My ~~head hath its~~ coronal,

The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.

Oh evil day ! if I were sullen

While Earth herself is adorning,

This sweet May-morning,

And the Children are culling

*Spiritually fellow
in with me
presence more
of nature*

On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm : —

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
— But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone :

The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

2 years interval v

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home :

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy ;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east

Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended ;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.

small
gleam
though
worthwhile

heaven, the
preliminary
of the soul

VI

to amuse him

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

80
maternal
affection12
plain as
compassion
with no
her20
gives with which
her
care

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes !
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song :
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part ;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

90
trys & object

part like

100

assume

train

VIII

In writing
So late

110

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity ;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,

et. Plato
systems of eternity

Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;

121
darkness of
earthly existence

Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by ;

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

120
during childhood
stands on the
top of his life

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife,
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

warring with
happiness

Dullness of the existence

IX

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers

when
our life
has been
converted to
ashes

penetrate his
130
even like a
penetrator

What was so fugitive !
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction : not indeed

heavenly memories

permanence

For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,

innocent faith
calmly receptive

With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :

possession of eternal life

bliss, gratitude to

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise :
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a Creature

140

persistent doubts
as by the death
mortal man

words
voice

the
voice

the
voice

the
voice

the
voice

Moving about in words not realised, *understand*
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised :

But for those first affections,

emotions of childhood

Those shadowy recollections,

150

Which, be they what they may,

faint reminiscences of
heaven

Are yet the fountain light all of our day,

Are yet a master light of our seeing ;

Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make

Our noisy years seem moments in the being

Of the eternal Silence ; truths that wake,

To perish never ;

once they have
passed upon us

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,

reception

Nor Man nor Boy,

indolence

wayward passions
of a boy

160

Nor all that is at enmity with joy,

Can utterly abolish or destroy !

Hence in a season of calm weather

Though inland far we be,

Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither,

And see the Children sport upon the shore,

And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

the intricate symbol

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song !

And let the young Lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound !

170

grown up

WORDS WORTH.

7.

We in thought ^{here} will join your throng, *company*
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind ;

In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be ;

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering ;

In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind.

189

(1) instructive sympathy

can never die

(2)

*(3) unimpaired
(4) wisdom*

XI

And O ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,

Forebode not any severing of our loves!

anticipate loss

190

A Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might

I only have relinquished one delight

3 To live beneath your more habitual sway.

317 I love the Brooks which down their channels fret

*eat and
deeper*

Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

spotless Is lovely yet ;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye

That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;

Another race hath been, and other palms are won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,

To me the meanest flower that blows can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

200

price for

*winning
Olympic*

Ode to Duty

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God
O Duty ! if that name thou love
Who are a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove ;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe :
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them ; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot
Who do thy work, and know it not :
Oh ! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around them cast.

10

Serene will be our day and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

20

I, loving freedom, and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust

And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

30

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

40

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and
strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
I call thee : I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
Oh, let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

50

(1) Memoirs of a ...
102, *classed in* *poem of imagination*
SELECTED POEMS
retrospective poem of daffodils
the small celandine
To a Highland Girl: at Inversneyde, upon Loch
Lomond *Emotion reflected in tranquility*

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head
And these grey rocks; that household lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep
But, O fair Creature! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart;
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee neither know I, nor thy peers:
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence,
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear

"73rd year"
"Porphyry"
in the
last
line
—worth
over
remembering

because it's a dream
disturbance

because it's
beautiful
dream (hiding place)

cannot believe
that she can be
real

20
playmate
(obscure)

because of look

distinguished from
those acquired
from
education
— her own

30
she was
no false
shyness
—

The freedom of a Mountaineer :
 A face with gladness overspread !
 Soft smiles, by human kindness bred !
 And seemliness complete, that sways
 Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;
 With no restraint, but such as springs
 From quick and eager visitings
 Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
 Of thy few words of English speech :
 A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
 That gives thy gestures grace and life !
 So have I, not unmoved in mind,
 Seen birds of tempest-loving kind —
 Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
 For thee who art so beautiful ?

O happy pleasure ! here to dwell
 Beside thee in some heathy dell ;
 Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
 A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess !

But I could frame a wish for thee
 More like a grave reality :

Thou art to me but as a wave
 Of the wild sea ; and I would have
 Some claim upon thee, if I could,
 Though but of common neighbourhood.

What joy to hear thee, and to see !

Thy elder Brother I would be,

Thy Father — anything to thee !

Now thanks to Heaven ! that of its grace
 Hath led me to this lonely place.

Joy have I had ; and going hence
 I bear away my recompense.

In spots like these it is we prize
 Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes :

Chaucer.
 expression of joy in
 smiles were
 kindly thoughts

holiness

thought about
 comfort of old

in
 endurance

barren place with
 white thistles

Love - no
 suggested
 in which
 pursued.

the more
 prosaic sit
 of father
 brother a
 introduced

the weather
 with its trip
 movement
 peace with the
 hand to hand

Then, why should I be loth to stir?
 I feel this place was made for her;
 To give new pleasure like the past,
 Continued long as life shall last.
 Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
 Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part:
 For I, methinks, till I grow old,
 As fair before me shall behold,
 As I do now, the cabin small,
 The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
 And Thee, the spirit of them all!

As long as she ⁷⁰
 lives she will
 derive fresh
 pleasure from
 it

The Solitary Reaper

James in Scotland in 1803

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland Lass!
 Reaping and singing by herself;
 Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
 And sings a melancholy strain;
 O listen! for the Vale profound
 Is overflowing with the sound

deity
 Reper
 Thomas Widdicom
 James in Scotland

like all
 songs of Celtic
 vale

No Nightingale did ever chant
 More welcome notes to weary bands
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands: *oases*
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

Caravan 10
 tired after
 a weary
 march

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And *lovely*

charm
 swept
 Helianthus

she singing Gaelic
 tongue

Group Island
 N. W. Scotland

*Pictures gallery of WORDSWORTH, also new she was 13
of delight, & 20*

And battles long ago :

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

What'er the theme, the Maiden sang

As if her song could have no ending

I saw her singing at her work,

And o'er the sickle bending ; -

I listened, motionless and still ;

And, as I mounted up the hill

The music in my heart I bore,

Long after it was heard no more.

Nutting

— IT seems a day

(I speak of one from many singled out)

One of those heavenly days that cannot die ;

When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,

I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth

With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,

A nutting-crook in hand ; and turned my steps

Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,

Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds

Which for that service had been husbanded,

By exhortation of my frugal Dame -

Motley accoutrement, of power to smile

At thorns, and brakes, and brambles - and, in truth,

More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless rocks,

Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,

Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook

Unvisited, where not a broken bough

*Flash upon that mirror
which is the bliss of Solitude*

Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation ; but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with tempering clusters hung, 20
A virgin scene !— A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet ;— or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played ;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves 30
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye ;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And — with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep —
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure, 40
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage : and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being : and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past ;
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned 50
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,

I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky. —
 Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
 In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand
 Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

COLERIDGE

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART I

An ancient
 Mariner meet-
 eth three Gal-
 lants bidden
 to a wedding-
 feast, and de-
 taineth one.

IT is an ancient Mariner,
 And he stoppeth one of three.
 “ By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
 Now wherefore stopp’st thou me ?

The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide
 And I am next of kin ;
 The guests are met, the feast is set :
 May’st hear the merry din.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,
 “ There was a ship,” quoth he. 10
 “ Hold off ! unhand me, grey-beard loon ! ”
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-
 Guest is spell-
 bound by the
 eye of the old
 seafaring man,
 and constrain-
 ed to hear his
 tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
 The Wedding-Guest stood still,
 And listens like a three years’ child :
 The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
 He cannot choose but hear ;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

The Mariner
tells how the
ship sailed
southward
with a good
wind and fair
weather till it
reached the
line.

“ The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—”
The Wedding-Guest hear beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

30

The Wedding-
Guest heareth
the bridal
music ; but
the Mariner
continueth
his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

The ship
driven by a
storm toward
the south
pole.

“ And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dripping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

50

And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold :
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

The land of
 ice, and of
 fearful sounds
 where no
 living thing
 was to be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
 Did send a dismal sheen :
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
 The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
 The ice was all around : 60
 It cracked and growled, and roared and
 howled.

Like voices in a swound !

Till a great
 sea-bird,
 called the
 Albatross,
 came through
 the snow-fog,
 and was
 received with
 great joy and
 hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,
 Through the fog it came ;
 As if it had been a Christian soul,
 We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
 And round and round it flew.
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
 The helmsman steered us through ! 70

And lo ! the
 Albatross
 proveth a bird
 of good omen,
 and followeth
 the ship as it
 returned
 northward
 through fog
 and floating
 ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
 The Albatross did follow,
 And every day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
 It perched for vespers nine ;
 While all the night, through fog-smoke white,
 Glimmered the white moon-shine."

The ancient
Mariner
inhospitably
killeth the
pious bird of
good omen.

“ God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !— 80
Why look’st thou so ? ”—“ With my cross-
bow

I shot the Albatross.

PART II

“ The Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners’ hollo ! 90

His shipmates
cry out against
the ancient
Mariner, for
killing the
bird of good
luck.

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work ’em woe :
For all averred, I had killed the bird,
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow !

But when the
fog cleared
off, they
justify the
same, and
thus make
themselves
accomplices
in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God’s own head,
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist. 100
’Twas right said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze
continues ;
the ship enters
the Pacific
Ocean, and
sails north-
ward, even
till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed

ms. u630

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

110

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

120

The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

130

A Spirit had followed them ;
one of the invisible inhabitants of his planet, neither
And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so ;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

departed souls nor angels ; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
 Was withered at the root ;
 We could not speak, no more than if
 We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates Ah ! well a-day ! what evil looks
 in their sore Had I from old and young ! 140
 distress, would Instead of the cross, the Albatross
 fain throw the About my neck was hung.
 whole guilt on the ancient
 Mariner, in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his
 neck.

PART III

“ There passed a weary time. Each throat
 Was parched, and glazed each eye.
 A weary time ! a weary time !
 How glazed each weary eye ! —
 When looking westward, I beheld
 A something in the sky.

The ancient
 Mariner be-
 holdeth a sign
 in the element
 afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
 And then it seemed a mist ; 150
 It moved and moved, and took at last
 A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
 And still it neared and neared :
 As if it dodged a water-sprite,
 It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 approach, it We could nor laugh nor wail ;
 seemeth him Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
 to be a ship ; I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, 160
 and at a dear And cried, A sail ! a sail !
 ransom he
 freeth his
 speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 Agape they heard me call :
 A flash of joy Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in,
 As they were drinking all.

And horror follows. For
 can it be a
 ship that
 comes onward
 without wind
 or tide ?
 ' See ! see ! ' (I cried) ' she tacks no more !
 Hither to work us weal,
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel ! ' 170

The western wave was all aflame.
 The day was well-nigh done !
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth
 him but the
 skeleton of
 a ship.
 And straight the Sun was flecked with bars
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
 With broad and burning face. 180

And its ribs
 are seen as
 bars on the
 face of the
 setting Sun.
 Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears !
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun
 Like restless gossameres ?

The Spectre-
 Woman and
 her Death-
 mate, and no
 other on
 board the
 skeleton ship.
 Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate ?
 And is that Woman all her crew ?
 Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
 Is Death that woman's mate ?

Like vessel,
like crew !

Death and
Life-in-Death
have dived for
the ship's
crew, and she
(the latter)
winneth the
ancient
Mariner.

Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190
Her locks were yellow as gold :

Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice ;
' The game is done ! I've won ! I've
won ! '

Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight
within the
courts of the
Sun.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out.
At one stride comes the dark ; 200
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising
of the Moon.

We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my hearts, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white ;

From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star 210
Within the nether tip.

One after
another.

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.
Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

His shipmates
drop down
dead.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on
the ancient
Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly ;—
They fled to bliss or woe !
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow ! ”—

220

PART IV

The Wedding-
Guest feareth
that a Spirit
is talking to
him.

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner !—
I fear thy skinny hand
And thou art long, and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye.
And thy skinny hand, so brown.”—
“ Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-
Guest !

230

But the
ancient Ma-
riner assureth
him of his
bodily life, and
proceedeth to
relate his hor-
rible penance.

This body dropt not down.
Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth
the creatures
of the calm,

The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

And envieth
that *they*
should live,
and so many
lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

240

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
 And the balls like pulses beat ;
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the
 sky
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,
 And the dead were at my feet. 250

But the curse The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
 liveth for Nor rot nor reek did they :
 him in the The look with which they looked on me
 eye of the Had never passed away.
 dead men.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
 A spirit from on high ;
 But oh ! more horrible than that
 Is a curse in a dead man's eye ! 260
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
 And yet I could not die.

In his loneli- The moving Moon went up the sky,
 ness and And nowhere did abide :
 fixedness he Softly she was going up,
 yearneth to- And a star or two beside —
 wards the
 journeying Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
 Moon, and the Like April hoar-frost spread ;
 stars that still But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
 sojourn, yet The charmed water burnt alway 270
 still move
 onward ; and A still and awful red.
 everywhere
 the blue sky
 belongs to
 them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and
 their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as
 lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent
 joy at their arrival.

By the light Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 of the Moon he I watched the water-snakes :
 beholdeth They moved in tracks of shining white,
 God's crea- And when they reared, the elfish light
 tures of the Fell off in hoary flakes.
 great calm.

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watched their rich attire :
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coiled and swam ; and every track 280
 Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.
 He blesseth them in his heart.

O happy living things ! no tongue
 Their beauty might declare :
 A spring of love gushed from my heart
 And I blessed them unaware :
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
 And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
 Like lead into the sea.

PART V

“ Oh sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
 Beloved from pole to pole !
 To Mary Queen the praise be given !
 She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
 That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
 That had so long remained,
 I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
 And when I awoke, it rained. 300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
 My garments all were dank ;
 Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
 And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs :
 I was so light almost
 I thought that I had died in sleep,
 And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth
 sounds and
 seeth strange
 sights and
 commotions in
 the sky and
 the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :
 It did not come anear :
 But with its sound it shook the sails,
 That were so thin and sere.

310

The upper air burst into life !
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
 To and fro they were hurried about !
 And to and fro, and in and out,
 The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
 And the rain poured down from one black
 cloud ;
 The Moon was at its edge.

320

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The Moon was at its side :
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 The lightning fell with never a jag,
 A river steep and wide.

The bodies of
 the ship's crew
 are inspired
 and the ship
 moves on ;

The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on !
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 The dead men gave a groan.

330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze up blew :
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me." —

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner ! ” —

“ Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
’Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

For when it dawned — they dropped their
arms, 350
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

But not by
the souls of
the men, nor
by dæmons
of earth or
middle air, but
by a blessed
troop of
angelic spirits,
sent down by
the invocation
of the guar-
dian saint.

And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute ;
 And now it is an angel's song,
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June,
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune.

370

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe :
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
 Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome
 Spirit from
 the south-pole
 carries on the
 ship as far as
 the Line, in
 obedience to
 the angelic
 troop, but still
 requireth
 vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The spirit slid : and it was he
 That made the ship to go.
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also.

380

The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean :
 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion —
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
 She made a sudden bound :
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond.

390

The Polar
Spirit's fellow-
dæmons, the
invisible in-
habitants of
the element,
take part in
his wrong ;
and two of
them relate,
one to the
other, that
penance long
and heavy for
the ancient
Mariner hath
been accorded
to the Polar
Spirit, who
returneth
southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

‘ Is it he ? ’ quoth one, ‘ Is this the man ?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

400

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.’

The other was a softer voice
As soft as honey-dew :
Quoth he, ‘ The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.’

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

“ ‘ But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the ocean doing ? ’

410

SECOND VOICE

‘ Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast ;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go ;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 See, brother, see ! how graciously
 She looketh down on him.'

420

FIRST VOICE

The Mariner
 hath been
 cast into a
 trance ; for
 the angelic
 power causeth
 the vessel to
 drive north-
 ward faster
 than human
 life could
 endure.

' But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind ? '

SECOND VOICE

' The air is cut away before,
 And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
 Or we shall be belated :
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The super-
 natural motion
 is retarded ;
 the Mariner
 awakes, and
 his penance
 begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
 As in a gentle weather :
 'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high,
 The dead men stood together.

430

All stood together on the deck,
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,
 That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never passed away :
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray.

440

The curse is
finally ex-
piated.

And now this spell was snapt : once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread. 450

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

And the
ancient
Mariner be-
holdeth his
native
country.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
' O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.' 470

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn !
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,
 And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
 That stands above the rock :
 The moonlight steeped in silentness
 The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light 480
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colours came.

The angelic
 spirits leave
 the dead
 bodies,

And appear in
 their own
 forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were :
 I turned my eyes upon the deck —
 Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
 And, by the holy rood !
 A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
 On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
 It was a heavenly sight !
 They stood as signals to the land,
 Each one a lovely light ;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
 No voice did they impart —
 No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
 Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
 My head was turned perforce away,
 And I saw a boat appear. 500

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast :
 Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice :
 It is the Hermit good !
 He singeth loud his godly hymns 510
 That he makes in the wood.
 He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

The Hermit
 of the Wood.

“ This Hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea.
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
 He loves to talk with mariners
 That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
 He hath a cushion plump : 520
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
 ‘ Why, this is strange, I trow !
 Where are those lights so many and fair,
 That signal made but now ? ’

Approacheth
the ship with
wonder.

' Strange, by my faith ! ' the Hermit said —
And they answered not our cheer !
The planks look warped ! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere ! 530
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along ;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

' Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look ' —
(The Pilot made reply)
' I am a-feared.' — ' Push on, push on !' 540
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship
suddenly
sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient
Mariner is
saved in the
Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat ;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked 560
And fell down in a fit ;
The Holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : The Pilot's boy
Who now doth crazy go
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
' Ha ! ha ! ' quoth he, ' full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient
Mariner
earnestly en-
treateth the
Hermit to
shrieve him ;
and the
penance of
life falls on
him.

' O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man ! '
The Hermit crossed his brow.
' Say quick,' quoth he, ' I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou ? '

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ; 580
And then it left me free.

And ever and
anon through-
out his future
life an agony
constraineth
him to travel
from land to
and ;

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
 I have strange power of speech ;
 That moment that his face I see,
 I know the man that must hear me :
 To him my tale I teach.

590

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
 The wedding-guests are there :
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are :
 And hark the little vesper bell,
 Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide, wide sea :
 So lonely, 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemed there to be.

600

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk,
 With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends
 And youths and maidens gay !

And to teach,
 by his own
 example, love
 and reverence
 to all things
 that God made
 and loveth.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
 He prayeth well, who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

610

He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small ;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,
 Is gone ; and now the Wedding-Guest 620
 Turned from the bridegroom's door,

He went like one that hath been stunned,
 And is of sense forlorn ;
 A sadder and a wiser man,
 He rose the morrow morn.

Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement

LOW was our pretty Cot : our tallest rose
 Peeped at the chamber-window. We could hear
 At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
 The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
 Our myrtles blossom'd ; and across the porch
 Thick jasmines twined : the little landscape round
 Was green and woody, and refreshed the eye,
 It was a spot which you might aptly call
 The Valley of Seclusion ! Once I saw
 (Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
 A wealthy son of commerce saunter by,
 Bristowa's citizen : methought, it calmed
 His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
 With wiser feelings ; for he paused, and looked
 With a pleased sadness, and gazed all around,
 Then eyed our Cottage, and gazed round again,
 And sighed, and said, it was a Blessed Place.

And we *were* blessed. Oft with patient ear
 Long-listening to the viewless skylark's note
 (Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
 Gleaming on sunny wings) in whispered tones
 I've said to my beloved, "Such, sweet girl!
 The inobtrusive song of Happiness,
 Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
 When the soul seeks to hear; when all is hushed,
 And the heart listens!"

20

But the time, when first
 From that low dell, steep up the stony mount
 I climbed with perilous toil and reached the top,
 Oh! what a goodly scene! *Here* the bleak mount,
 The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep,
 Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields
 And river, now with bushy rocks o'erbrowed,
 Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
 And seats, and lawns, the abbey and the wood,
 And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire;
 The Channel *there*, the Islands and white sails,
 Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills and shoreless Ocean —
 It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
 Had built him there a Temple: the whole World
 Seemed imaged in its vast circumference:
 No *wish* profaned my overwhelmed heart.
 Blest hour! It was a luxury, — to be!

30

Ah! quiet dell! dear cot, and mount sublime!
 I was constrained to quit you. Was it right,
 While my unnumbered brethren toiled and bled,
 That I should dream away the entrusted hours
 On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
 With feelings all too delicate for use?

40

Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
 Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth:

50

And he that works me good with unmoved face,
Does it but half : he chills me while he aids,
My benefactor, not my brother man !
Yet even this, this cold beneficence
Praise, praise it, O my Soul ! oft as thou scann'st
The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe !
Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,
Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies !
I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.

60

Yet oft when after honourable toil
Rests the tired mind, and waking loves to dream,
My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot !
Thy jasmine and thy window-peeping rose,
And myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
And I shall sigh fond wishes — sweet abode !
Ah ! — had none greater ! And that all had such !
It might be so — but the time is not yet.
Speed it, O Father ! Let thy Kingdom come !

70

Frost at Midnight

THE Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud — and hark, again ! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings : save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange

And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not ;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

10

20

But O ! how oft,

How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering *stranger* ! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells the poor man's only music rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come !
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams !
And so I boded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book :
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My playmate when we both were clothed alike !

30

40

Dear Babe, that sleepest cardled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought !
My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes ! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

50

60

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

70

Love

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve :
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve !

She leant against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight ;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope ! my joy ! my Genevieve
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story —
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace ;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand ;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

30

I told her how he pined : and ah !
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace ;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face !

40

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night ;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright ;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight !

50

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land !

And how she wept, and clasped his knees ;
And how she tended him in vain —
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain.

60

And that she nursed him in a cave ;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay.

His dying words — but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity !

All impluses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve ;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve ;

70

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long !

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin shame ;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

80

Her bosom heaved — she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stepped,
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace ;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

90

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride ;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

SCOTT

William and Helen

From heavy dreams fair Helen rose,
And eyed the dawning red :
“ Alas, my love, thou tarriest long !
O art thou false or dead ? ”

With gallant Frederick's princely power
He sought the bold crusade,
But not a word from Judah's wars
Told Helen how he sped.

With Paynim and with Saracen
At length a truce was made,
And every knight returned to dry
The tears his love had shed.

Our gallant host was homeward bound
With many a song of joy :
Green waved the laurel in each plume,
The badge of victory.

And old and young, and sire and son,
To meet them crowd the way,
With shouts and mirth and melody,
The debt of love to pay.

Full many a maid her true-love met,
And sobbed in his embrace,
And fluttering joy in tears and smiles
Arrayed full many a face.

Nor joy nor smile for Helen sad,
She sought the host in vain ;
For none could tell her William's fate,
If faithless or if slain.

The martial band is past and gone
She rends her raven hair,
And in distraction's bitter mood
She weeps with wild despair.

30

"O, rise, my child," her mother said,
"Nor sorrow thus in vain ;
A perjured lover's fleeting heart
No tears recall again."

"O, Mother, what is gone is gone,
What's lost forever lorn :
Death, death alone can comfort me ;
O had I ne'er been born !

40

"O, break, my heart, O, break at once !
Drink my life-blood, Despair !
No joy remains on earth for me,
For me in heaven no share."

"O, enter not in judgment, Lord "
The pious mother prays ;
"Impute not guilt to thy frail child !
She knows not what she says.

"O, say thy paternoster, child !
O, turn to God and grace !
His will, that turned thy bliss to bale,
Can change thy bale to bliss."

50

"O mother, mother, what is bliss ?
O mother, what is bale ?
My William's love was heaven on earth,
Without it earth is hell.

“ Why should I pray to ruthless Heaven,
Since my loved William’s slain ?
I only prayed for William’s sake,
And all my prayers were vain.”

60

“ O, take the sacrament, my child,
And check these tears that flow ;
By resignation’s humble prayer,
O, hallowed be thy woe ! ”

“ No sacrament can quench this fire,
Or slake this scorching pain ;
No sacrament can bid the dead
Arise and live again.

“ O, break, my heart, O, break at once !
Be thou my god, Despair !
Heaven’s heaviest blow has fallen on me,
And vain each fruitless prayer.”

70

“ O, enter not in judgment, Lord,
With thy frail child of clay !
She knows not what her tongue has spoke ;
Impute it not, I pray !

“ Forbear, my child, this desperate woe,
And turn to God and grace ;
Well can devotion’s heavenly glow
Convert thy bale to bliss.”

80

“ O mother, mother, what is bliss ?
O mother, what is bale ?
Without my William what were heaven,
Or with him what were hell ? ”

Wild she arraigns the eternal doom,
 Upbraids each sacred power,
 Till, spent, she sought her silent room,
 All in the lonely tower.

She beat her breast, she wrung her hands,
 Till sun and day were o'er,
 And through the glimmering lattice shone
 The Twinkling of the star.

90

Then, crash ! the heavy drawbridge fell
 That o'er the moat was hung ;
 And, clatter ! clatter ! on its boards
 The hoof of courser rung.

The clank of echoing steel was heard
 As off the rider bounded ;
 And slowly on the winding stair
 A heavy footstep sounded.

100

And hark ! and hark ! a knock—tap ! tap !
 A rustling stifled noise ; —
 Door-latch and tinkling staples ring ; —
 At length a whispering voice.

“ Awake, awake, arise, my love !
 How, Helen, dost thou fare ?
 Wak'st thou, or sleep'st ! laugh'st thou, or weep'st ?
 Hast thought on me, my fair ? ”

“ My love ! my love ! — so late by night ! —
 I waked, I wept for thee :
 Much have I borne since dawn of morn ;
 Where, William, couldst thou be ?

110

E

“ We saddle late — from Hungary
 I rode since darkness fell ;
 And to its bourne we both return
 Before the matin-bell.”

“ O, rest this night within my arms,
 And warm thee in their fold !
 Chill howls through hawthorn bush the wind :—
 My love is deadly cold.”

125

“ Let the wind howl through hawthorn bush !
 This night we must away ;
 The steed is wight, the spur is bright,
 I cannot stay till day.”

“ Busk, busk and boune ! Thou mount'st behind
 Upon my black barb steed :
 O'er stock and stile, a hundred miles,
 We haste to bridal bed.”

“ To-night — to-night a hundred miles ! —
 O dearest William, stay !
 The bell strikes twelve — dark, dismal hour !
 O, wait, my love, till day ! ”

130

“ Look here — look here — the moon shines clear—
 Full fast I ween we ride :
 Mount and away ! for ere the day
 We reach our bridal bed.

“ The black barb snorts, the bridle rings ;
 Haste, busk, and boune, and seat thee !
 The feast is made, the chamber spread,
 The bridal guests await thee.”

140

Strong love prevailed : she busks, she bounes,
She mounts the barb behind,
And round her darling William's waist
Her lily arms she twined.

And, hurry ! hurry ! off they rode,
As fast as fast might be ;
Spurned from the courser's thundering heels
The flashing pebbles flee.

And on the right and on the left,
Ere they could snatch a view,
Fast, fast each mountain, mead, and plain,
And cot and castle flew.

150

" Sit fast—dost fear ? — The moon shines clear —
Fleet goes my barb — keep hold !
Fear'st thou ? " — " O no ! " she faintly said ;
" But why so stern and cold ?

" What yonder rings ? what yonder sings ?
Why shrieks the owlet gray ? "
" 'Tis death-bell's clang, 'tis funeral song,
The body to the clay.

160

" With song and clang at morrow's dawn
Ye may inter the dead ;
To-night I ride with my young bride
To deck our bridal bed.

" Come with thy chair, thou confined guest,
To swell our nuptial song !
Come, priest, to bless our marriage feast !
Come all, come all along !"

Ceased clang and song ; down sunk the bier ;
 The shrouded corpse arose :
 And hurry ! hurry ! all the train
 The thundering steed pursues.

170

And forward ! forward ! on they go ;
 High snorts the straining steed ;
 Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
 As headlong on the speed.

" O William, why this savage haste !
 And where thy bridal bed ? "
 "'Tis distant far, low, damp, and chill,
 And narrow, trustless maid."

180

" No room for me ? "—" Enough for both ;—
 Speed, speed, my barb, thy course ! "
 O'er thundering bridge, through boiling surge,
 He drove the furious horse.

Tramp ! tramp ! along the land they rode,
 Splash ! splash ! along the sea ;
 The scourge is wight, the spur is bright,
 The flashing pebbles flee.

Fled past on right and left how fast
 Each forest, grove, and bower !
 On right and left fled past how fast
 Each city, town, and tower !

190

" Dost fear ? dost fear ? The moon shines clear,
 Dost fear to ride with me ? —
 Hurrah ! hurrah ! the dead can ride ! "—
 " O William, let them be ! —

“ See there, see there ! What yonder swings
And creaks, mid whistling rain ? ” —

“ Gibbet and steel, the accursed wheel ;
A murderer in his chain. —

200

“ Hollo ! thou felon, follow here :
To bridal bed we ride ;
And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
Before me and my bride.”

And, hurry ! hurry ! clash, clash, clash !
The wasted form descends ;
And fleet as wind through hazel bush
The wild career attends.

Tramp ! tramp ! along the land they rode,
Splash ! splash ! along the sea ;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

210

How fled what moonshine faintly showed !
How fled what darkness hid !
How fled the earth beneath their feet,
The Heaven above their head !

“ Dost fear ? dost fear ? The moon shines clear,
And well the dead can ride ;
Dost, faithful Helen, fear for them ? ” —
“ O leave in peace the dead ! ”

220

“ Barb ! Barb ! methinks I hear the cock,
The sand will soon be run :
Barb ! Barb ! I smell the morning air ;
The race is well-nigh done.”

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

“Hurrah! hurrah! well ride the dead;
The bride, the bride is come;
And soon we reach the bridal bed,
For, Helen, here's my home.”

230

Reluctant on its rusty hinge
Revolved an iron door,
And by the pale moon's setting beam
Were seen a church and tower.

With many a shriek and cry whiz round
The birds of midnight scared;
And rustling like autumnal leaves
Unhallowed ghosts were heard.

240

O'er many a tomb and tombstone pale
He spurred the fiery horse,
Till suddenly at an open grave
He checked the wondrous course.

The falling gauntlet quits the rein,
Down drops the casque of steel,
The cuirass leaves his shrinking side,
The spur his gory heel.

The eyes desert the naked skull,
The mouldering flesh the bone,
Till Helen's lily arms entwine
A ghastly skeleton.

250

The furious barb snorts fire and foam,
 And with a fearful bound
 Dissolves at once in empty air,
 And leaves her on the ground.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
 Pale spectres flit along,
 Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
 And howl the funeral song ;

260

“ E’en when the heart’s with anguish cleft
 Revere the doom of Heaven,
 Her soul is from her body reft ;
 Her spirit be forgiven ! ”

Harp of the North, Farewell !

HARP of the North, farewell ! The hills grow dark,
 On purple peaks a deeper shade descending ;
 In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
 The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
 Resume thy wizard elm ! the fountain lending,
 And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy ;
 They numbers sweet with nature’s vespers blending,
 With distant echo from the fold and lea,
 And herd-boy’s evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp !

10

Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
 And little reck I of the censure sharp
 May idly cavil at an idle lay.

Much have I owed thy strains on life’s long way,
 Through secret woes the world has never known,
 When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
 And bitterer was the grief devoured alone. —
 That I o’erlive such woes, Enchantress ! is thine own.

Hark ! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
 Some spirit of the Air has waked thy string ! 20
 'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
 'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
 Receding now, the dying numbers ring
 Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell ;
 And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
 A wandering witch-note of the distant spell —
 And now, 'tis silent all ! — Enchantress, fare thee well

Brignall Banks

O, BRIGNALL banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen.
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
 Beneath the turrets high,
 A maiden on the castle wall
 Was singing merrily :
 " O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green ; 10
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there
 Than reign our English queen."
 " If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
 To leave both tower and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead we
 That dwell by dale and down.
 And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May." 20

Yet sung she, " Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green ;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English queen.

" I read you, by your bugle horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood."

" A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light ;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."

30

Yet sung she, " Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay ;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May !

" With burnished brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."

40

" I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear ;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.
And O, though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare
Would reign my Queen of May !

" Maiden ! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die ;
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I !

50

And when I'm with my comrades met
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget,
 Nor think what we are now.
 Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen."

60

BYRON

The Prisoner of Chillon

MY hair is grey, but not with years,
 Nor grew it white
 In a single night,
 As men's have grown from sudden fears :
 My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
 But rusted with a vile repose,
 For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
 And mine has been the fate of those
 To whom the goodly earth and air
 Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare ;
 But this was for my father's faith
 I suffer'd chains and courted death ;
 That father perish'd at the stake
 For tenets he would not forsake ;
 And for the same his lineal race
 In darkness found a dwelling-place ;
 We were seven — who now are one,
 Six in youth, and one in age,
 Finish'd as they had begun,
 Proud of Persecution's rage ;
 One in fire, and two in field
 Their belief with blood have seal'd

10

20

Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied ;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left ;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp :
And in each pillar there is a ring,

30

And in each ring there is a chain ;
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years --- I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I living by his side.

40

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three -- yet, each alone,
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight :
And thus together -- yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,

50

'Twas still some solace, in the dearth,
 Of the pure elements of earth,
 To hearken to each other's speech,
 And each turn comforter to each
 With some new hope, or legend old,
 Or song heroically bold ;
 But even these at length grew cold.

Our voices took a dreary tone,
 An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound, not full and free,
 As they of yore were wont to be ;
 It might be fancy, but to me
 They never sounded like our own.

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest
 I ought to do — and did my best —
 And each did well in his degree.

The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him, with eyes as blue as heaven —

For him my soul was sorely moved ;
 And truly might it be distress'd
 To see such bird in such a nest ;
 For he was beautiful as day —

 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free) —
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,

 Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun :

 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for nought but others' ills,
 And then they flow'd like mountain rills,

60

70

80

Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

90

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind ;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy :— but not in chains to pine :
His spirit wither'd with their clank,

I saw it silently decline —

And so perchance in sooth did mine :
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.

100

He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf ;
To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls :
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow ;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,

110

Which round about the wave inthrals :
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made— and like a living grave,
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day ;

Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd ;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky ;

120

And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food ;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care :

130

The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den ;

But what were these to us or him ?
These wasted not his heart or limb ;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side ;
But why delay the truth ? — he died.

140

I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.

He died, and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.

150

I begg'd them as a boon to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,

That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer —
They coldly laugh'd, and laid him there :
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love ;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument !

160

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free ;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.

170

Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood :
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread ;
But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow :
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
And grieved for those he left behind ;

180

With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray ;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —

190

A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost
In this lost loss, of all the most ;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less :

200

I listen'd, but I could not hear ;
I call'd, for I was wild with fear ;
I new 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished ;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him :— I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived, I only drew

210

The accursed breath of dungeon-dew ;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.

One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe :
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas ! my own was full as chill ;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —

220

A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.

I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

230

What next befell me then and there

I know not well — I never knew —
First came the loss of light, and air,

And then of darkness too :
I had no thought, no feeling — none —
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist :

As shrubless crags within the mist ;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey ;
It was not night, it was not day ;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness without a place ;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime.

240

But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death :
A sea of stagnant idleness ;
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless !

250

A light broke in upon my brain, —

It was the carol of a bird ;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,

And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery ;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track ;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,

260

And tamer than upon the tree ;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me !

270

I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more :
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,

Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,

280

Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise ;
For — Heaven forgive that thought ! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile —
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me ;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,

290

And left me twice so doubly lone,
Lone as the corse within its shroud,
Lone as a solitary cloud, —

A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate ;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was :— my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part ;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod ;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape ;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me :
No child, no sire, no kin had I,

300

310

320

No partner in my misery ;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad ;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

330

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame ;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush ;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down !

340

And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view ;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.

350

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all ;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly ;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled — and would fain
I had not left my recent chain

And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load ;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

360

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote ;
At last men came to set me free ;
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where ;
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own !
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home :
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they ?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell !
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell ;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends,
To make us what we are : — even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

370

380

390

Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte

'Tis done — but yesterday a King !
 And arm'd with Kings to strive —
 And now thou art a nameless thing :
 So abject — yet alive !
 Is this the man of thousand thrones,
 Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
 And can he thus survive ?
 Since he, miscalled the Morning Star,
 Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man ! why scourge thy kind
 Who bow'd so low the knee ?
 By gazing on thyself grown blind,
 Thou taught'st the rest to see.
 With might unquestion'd, — power to save, —
 Thine only gift hath been the grave,
 To those that worshipp'd thee ;
 Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
 Ambition's less than littleness !

Thanks for that lesson. — It will teach
 To after-warriors more,
 Than high Philosophy can preach,
 And vainly preach'd before.
 That spell upon the minds of men
 Breaks never to unite again,
 That led them to adore
 Those Pagod things of sabre sway
 With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

The triumph and the vanity,
 The rapture of the strife —
 The earthquake voice of Victory,
 To thee the breath of life ;

10

20

30

The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
 Wherewith renown was rife—
All quell'd ! — Dark Spirit ! what must be
The madness of thy memory !

The Desolator desolate !
 The Victor overthrown !
The Arbiter of others' fate
 A Suppliant for his own !
Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope ?
 Or dread of death alone ?
To die a prince — or live a slave —
Thy choice is most ignobly brave !

40

He who of old would rend the oak,
 Dream'd not of the rebound :
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke —
 Alone — how look'd he round ?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed hast done at length,
 And darker fate hast found :
He fell, the forest prowler's prey ;
But thou must eat thy heart away !

50

The Roman, when his burning heart
 Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger — dared depart,
 In savage grandeur, home —
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
 Yet left him such a doom !
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

60

The Spaniard when the lust of sway
 Had lost its quickening spell,
 Cast crowns for rosaries away,
 An empire for a cell ;
 A strict accountant of his beads,
 A subtle disputant on creeds,
 His dotage trifled well :
 Yet better had he neither known
 A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

70

But thou — from thy reluctant hand
 The thunderbolt is wrung—
 Too late thou leav'st the high command
 To which thy weakness clung ;
 All Evil Spirit as thou art,
 It is enough to grieve the heart
 To see thine own unstrung ;
 To think that God's fair world hath been
 The footstool of thing so mean ;

80

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
 Who thus can heard his own !
 And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
 And thank'd him for a throne !
 Fair Freedom ! we may hold thee dear,
 When thus thy mightiest foes their fear,
 In humblest guise have shown.
 On ! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
 A brighter name to lure mankind !

90

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
 Nor written thus in vain —
 Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
 Or deepen every stain :

If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
 To shame the world again —
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night ?

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
 Is vile as vulgar clay ;
Thy scales, Mortality ! are just
 To all that pass away :
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
 To dazzle and dismay :
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

100

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
 Thy still imperial bride ;
How bears her breast the torturing hour ?
 Still clings she to thy side ?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
 Thou throneless Homicide ?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,—
'Tis worth thy vanish'd diadem !

110

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
 And gaze upon the sea ;
That element may meet thy smile —
 It ne'er was ruled by thee !
Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
 That Earth is now as free !
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.

120

Thou Timour ! in his captive's cage,
 What thoughts will there be thine,
 While brooding in thy prison'd rage ?
 But one— 'The world *was* mine !'
 Unless, like he of Babylon,
 All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
 Life will not long confine
 That spirit pour'd so widely forth—
 So long obey'd—so little worth !

30

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
 Wilt thou withstand the shock ?
 And share with him, the unforgiven,
 He vulture and his rock !
 Foredoom'd by God—by man accurst,
 And that last act, though not thy worst,
 The very Fiend's arch mock ;
 He in his fall preserved his pride
 And, if a mortal, had as proudly died !

140

There was a day—there was an hour,
 While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine
 When that immeasurable power
 Unsated to resign
 Had been an act of purer fame
 Than gathers round Marengo's name,
 And gilded thy decline,
 Through the long twilight of all time,
 Despite some passing clouds of crime.

150

But thou forsooth must be a king,
 And don the purple vest,
 As if that foolish rope could wring
 Remembrance from thy breast.

Where is that faded garment ? where
 The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
 The star, the string, the crest ?
 Vain forward child of empire ! say,
 Are all thy playthings snatched away ?

160

Where may the wearied eye repose
 When gazing on the Great ;
 Where neither guilty glory glows,
 Nor despicable state ?
 Yes—one — the first — the last — the best —
 The Cincinnatus of the West,
 Whom envy dared not hate,
 Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
 To make man blush there was but one !

170

Lake Lemman

(*From "Childe Harold," Canto III.*)

I

CLEAR, placid Lemman ! thy contrasted lake,
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
 To waft me from distraction ; once I loved
 Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
 Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
 That I with stern delights should e'er have been so
 moved.

2

It is the hush of night, and all between
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
 Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,

10

Save darken'd Jura, whose cap't heights appear
 Precipitously steep ; and drawing near,
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood ; on the ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

3

He is an evening reveller, who makes
 His life an infancy, and sings his fill ;
 At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
 Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
 There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
 But that is fancy, for the starlight dew
 All silently their tears of love instil,
 Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
 Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

20

4

Ye stars ! which are the poetry of heaven !
 If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
 Of men and empires, — 'tis to be forgiven,
 That in our aspirations to be great,
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
 And claim a kindred with you ; for ye are
 A beauty and a mystery, and create
 In us such love and reverence from afar,
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves
 a star.

30

5

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most :
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep :—
 All heaven and earth are still : From the high host

40

Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain coast,
 All is concenter'd in a life intense,
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and Defence :

6

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
 In solitude, where we are *least* alone ;
 A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
 And purifies from self : it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which makes known 50
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
 Binding all things with beauty :—'twould disarm
 The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

7

Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places, and the peak
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak
 Uprear'd of human hands. Come, and compare 60
 Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
 With nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer !

8

The sky is changed !—and such a change ! Oh night,
 And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
 Of a dark eye in woman ! Far along,
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags among

Leaps the live thunder ! Not from one lone cloud
 But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
 And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud !

75

9

And this is in the night :—Most glorious night ?
 Thou wert not sent for slumber ! let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
 A portion of the tempest and of thee !
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
 And the big rain comes dancing to the earth !
 And now again 'tis black, — and now, the glee
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

80

10

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
 Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
 In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
 That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted :
 Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
 Love was the very root of the fond rage
 Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed :
 Itself expired, but leaving them an age
 Of years all winters, — war within themselves to wage :

90

11

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
 The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand :
 For here, not one, but many, make their play,
 And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,

Flashing and cast around ; of all the band,
 The brightest through these parted hills hath fork'd
 His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
 That in such gaps as desolation work'd,
 There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd.

12

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings ! ye ! 100
 With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
 To make these felt and feeling, well may be
 Things that have made me watchful ; the far roll
 Of your departing voices, is the knoll
 Of what in me is sleepless, —if I rest.
 But where of ye, O tempests ! is the goal ?
 Are ye like those within the human breast ?
 Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest ?

13

Could I embody and unbosom now
 That which is most within me,—could I wreak 110
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
 All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into *one* word,
 And that one word were Lightning, I would speak ;
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

SHELLEY

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

I

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats tho' unseen amongst us,—visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing
 As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain
 shower,
 It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
 Like memory of music fled,—
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

10

II

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
 Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
 Ask why the sunlight not for ever
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
 Why fear and dream and death and birth
 Cast on the daylight of this earth
 Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
 For love and hate, despondency and hope?

20

III

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
 To sage or poet these responses given—
 Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
 Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
 Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to
 sever,

30

From all we hear and all we see,
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.
 Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
 Or music by the night wind sent
 Thro' strings of some still instruments,
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
 Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart
 Thou messenger of sympathies,
 That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
 Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,
 Like darkness to a dying flame!
 Depart not as thy shadow came,
 Depart not—lest the grave should be,
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

40

V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
 Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.

50

I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed ;
 I was not heard—I saw them not—
 When musing deeply on the lot
 Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing
 All vital things that wake to bring
 News of birds and blossoming,—
 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy !

60

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow ?
 With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
 I call the phantoms of thousand hours
 Each from his voiceless grave ; they have in visioned
 bowers
 Of studious zeal or love's delight
 Outwatched with me the envious night—
 They know that never joy illumed my brow
 Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
 This world from its dark slavery,
 That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

70

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene
 When noon is past—there is a harmony
 In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
 Which thro' the summer is not heard or seen,
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been !
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth
 Of nature on my passive youth
 Descended, to my onward life supply

80

Its calm—to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

The World's Great Age begins anew

THE world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn :
Heaven smites, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far ;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

10

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize ;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be !
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free :
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

20

Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime ;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

30

Saturn and Love their long repose
 Shall buist, more bright and good
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,
 Than many unsubdued :
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease ! must hate and death return ?
 Cease ! must men kill and die ?
 Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn
 Of bitter prophecy.

40

The world is weary of the past,
 Oh, might it die or rest at last !

(Final Chorus from *He!las.*)

Ozymandias

I MET a traveller from an antique land
 Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed :
 And on the pedestal these words appear :
 ‘ My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :

10

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Ode to the West Wind

I

O WILD West Wind thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

10

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, oh, hear !

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean

Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aery surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

20

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all the congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : oh, hear !

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

30

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves : oh, hear !

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,

50

60

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

with lightness of touch of the headman is a set off to the 70 line, fight of two lovers in the poem.

KEATS

The Eve of St. Agnes

Keats makes us feel the chill of the season to our bones first its effect on birds & bees, next its effect on the old man at prayer, in the chapel the Roman Emperor Diocletian, commemorated on Jan 21. So Eve of St Agnes falls on Jan 20.

ST. AGNES' EVE — Ah, bitter chill it was !

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ; *For Jan is a cold*

The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass, *shelap*

And silent was the flock in woolly fold :

Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told

His rosary, and while his frosted breath,

Like pious incense from a censer old,

Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,

Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

Believe the Greek to great Medieval atmosphere
Virgin with in without pain or wear
Middle Ages 2 - 8 lines. common in Catholic.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;

10

Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,

And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,

Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :

The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,

Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :

Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,

He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails

To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails

the feeling unceasing in its effect — holy man who is a picture of power

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no — already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

4

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Star'd where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
breasts.

5

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded; all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight, *of delight & love*
 And soft adorings from their loves receive,
 Upon the ^{affection & love} honey'd middle of the night, ^{poetry}
 If ceremonies due they did aright ;
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
 Nor look behind, ^{lie with their faces upward} nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

50

their heart
bare

fancy - after all the whole thing was
 Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by - she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, *gallant*
 And back retir'd, not cool'd by high disdain,
 But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere : *elsewhere*
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

*The music is
 presentable app
 20 it appear
 he like the
 ing it appear
 mounted
 60*

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes, *vague*
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs *exciter*
 Amid the ^{secret} timbrels, and the throng'd resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ; *place full of crowd*
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amorn,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs, unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

70

of romance

*center of unshorn
 lamb*

9

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire *with the light*
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors, *burning with*
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores *for Madeline*
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline, *begs earnestly*
 But for one moment in the tedious hours, *if waiting*
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ; 80
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

10

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell : *buzzing about*
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes, *passionate love, murder*
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords, *wildly excited*
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul, *if enemy*
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90
lady

11

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand, *stick*
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame, *happy feet along as old people do*
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland : *will a good*
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face, *to distance*
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand, *bravely*
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place ;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

extremely cruel

12

Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ; 100
 He had a fever late, and in the fit ^{crooked}
 He cursed thee and thine, both house ^{family} and land :
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit ^{in the least}
 More tame for his grey hairs — Alas me ! flit !
 Flit like a ghost away." — " Ah, Gossip dear,
 We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
 And tell me how " — " Good Saints ! not here, not here ;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

13

He follow'd through a lowly ^{low arch'd passage} arched way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume ;
 And as she mutter'd " Well-a — well-a-day ! " ^{house} 110
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 " Now tell me where is Madeline," said he, ^{or private curtain}
 " O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously." ^{holy miss of the convent}
 " St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, ^{must do things unprofitable} 120
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 To venture so : it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro ! — St. Agnes' Eve !
 God's help ! my lady fair the conjurer plays ^{learn by phrase & means}
 This very night : good angels her deceive ! ^{of magic}
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

over
 11's danger

15

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone *in these old woman*
 Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book,
 As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
 His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. *rites*

16

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart *in full-blown*
 Made purple riot : then doth he propose *in detail like*
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
 " A cruel man and impious thou art : *in detail like*
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

17

" I will not harm her, by all saints I swear "
 Quoth Porphyro : " O may I ne'er find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face ;
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 Awake, with horried shout, my foemen's ears,
 And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves
 and bears."

150

18

frighten

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?

A poor, weak, palsy-stricken churchyard thing, *an epitaph*

Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;

Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,

Were never miss'd." Thus *complaining*, doth she bring

A gentler speech from burning Porphyro, *lament*

So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,

That Angela gives promise she will do

Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe. *or sorrow*

her prayers

160

19

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,

Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide

Him in a closet, of such privacy

That he might see her beauty unespied,

And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,

While legion'd fairies pac'd the *coverlet*, *walks the bed?*

And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed. *hands her*

Never on such a night have lovers met, *her sleep*

Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt. *170*

20

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:

"All cates and dainties shall be stored there

Quickly on this feast-night: by the *harmless* tambour frame

Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare, *circled for amb*

For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare

On such a catering trust my dizzy head.

Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer

The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,

Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

180

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
 The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware;
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
 She comes, she comes again, like ringdove fray'd and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

24

A casement high and triple arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
 kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross, soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven: Porphyro grew faint:
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

26

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees;
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

27

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
 Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
 Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
 Blissfully, haven'd both from joy and pain ;
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

240

28

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stepped,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast she
 slept.

250

29

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half-anguish'd, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :—
 The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

260

H

30

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanch'd linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

31

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
 "And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

32

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerv'd arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

from his lute 33

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy":
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured
 stone.

34

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
 There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

35

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
 How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

36

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
 Blendeth its odour with the violet, —
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

37

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
 " This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline ! "
 'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
 " No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
 Porphyro will leave ~~me here to fade and pine~~ —
 Cruel ! " what traitor could thee hither bring ?
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ; —
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

38

" My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed ?
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil and quest,
 A famish'd pilgrim, — saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

39

“Hark! ’tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
 Arise — arise ! the morning is at hand ;
 The bloated wassailers will never heed :
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
 Drown’d all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
 For o’er the southern moors I have a home for thee.”

350

40

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears —
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found. —
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop’d lamp was flickering by each door ;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter’d in the besieging wind’s uproar ;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

360

41

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide ;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side :
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide : —
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones ; —
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone : ay, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
 Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
 Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

370

To Autumn

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run ;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

10

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

20

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —
 While barred clouds bloom the soft dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
 Hedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

30

Fancy

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home ;
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
 Then let winged Fancy wander
 Through the thought still spread beyond her :
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming ;
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting : What do then ?
 Sit thee by the ingle, when

10

The sear fagot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night ;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overaw'd
Fancy, high-commission'd :—send her !
She has vassals to attend her :
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost ;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather ;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth :
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear ;
Rustle of the reaped corn ;
Sweet birds antheming the morn :
And, in the same moment—hark !
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold ;
White-plum'd lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ;
Shaded hyacinth, alway

Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep ;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the henbird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest ;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing.

60

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
Every thing is spoilt by use :
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gaz'd at ? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new ?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary ? Where's the face
One would meet in every place ?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft ?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind :
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide ;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone

70

80

Slipped its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid — Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash ;
 Quickly break her prison-string
 And such joys as these she'll bring.---
 Let the winged Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

90

Ode

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon ;
 With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
 And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns ;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got
 Perfume which on earth is not ;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth ;
 Philosophic numbers smooth ;
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

10

20

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again ;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week ;
 Of their sorrows and delights ;
 Of their passions and their spites ;
 Of their glory and their shame ;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day,
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

30

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ?

40

ROBERT BROWNING

Evelyn Hope

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead !

Sit and watch by her side an hour.
 That is her book-shelf, this her bed ;
 She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
 Beginning to die too, in the glass ;
 Little has yet been changed, I think :
 The shutters are shut, no light may pass
 Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died !

Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name ;
It was not her time to love ; beside,

10

Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,

And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—

And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope ?

What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,

Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And, just because I was thrice as old

20

And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told ?

We were fellow-mortals, naught beside ?

No, indeed ! for God above

Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love :

I claim you still, for my own love's sake !
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,

Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few :
Much is to learn, much to forget

30

Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come,—at last it will,

When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,

That body and soul so pure and gay ?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,

And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,

In the new life come in the old one's stead.

40

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
 Given up myself so many times,
 Gained me the gains of various men,
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes ;
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
 Either I missed or itself missed me :
 And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope !
 What is the issue ? Let us see !

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while !
 My heart seemed full as it could hold ;
 There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
 So, hush,— I will give you this leaf to keep :
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand !
 There, that is our secret : go to sleep !
 You will wake, and remember, and understand.

50

One Word More

TO E. B. B.

London, September, 1885

I

THERE they are, my fifty men and women
 Naming me the fifty poems finished !
 Take them, Love, the book and me together :
 Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

II

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
 Made and wrote them in a certain volume
 Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
 Else he only used to draw Madonnas :
 These, the world might view—but one, the volume

Who that one, you ask ? Your heart instructs you. 10
 Did she live and love it all her lifetime ?
 Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
 Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
 Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
 Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving,
 Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
 Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's ?

III

You and I would rather read that volume,
 (Taken to his beating bosom by it)
 Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael, 20
 Would we not ? than wonder at Madonnas —
 Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
 Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
 Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre --
 Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV

You and I will never read that volume.
 Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
 Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
 Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
 Cried, and the world cried too, " Ours, the treasure ! " 30
 Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V

Dante once prepared to paint an angel :
 Whom to please ? You whisper " Beatrice."
 While he mused and traced it and retraced it,
 (Peradventure with a pen corroded

Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
 When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
 Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
 Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
 Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
 Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
 Dante, who loved well because he hated,
 Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
 Dante standing, studying his angel,
 In there broke the folk of his Inferno
 Says he — “ Certain people of importance ”
 (Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)
 “ Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.”
 Says the poet — “ Then I stopped my painting.”

40

VI

You and I would rather see that angel,
 Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
 Would we not ?—than read a fresh Inferno.

50

VII

You and I will never see that picture.
 While he mused on love and Beatrice,
 While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
 In they broke, those “ people of importance ” :
 We and Bice bear the loss for ever.

VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture ?
 This : no artist lives and loves, that longs not
 Once, and only once, and for one only,
 (Ah, the prize !) to find his love a language

60

Fit and fair and simple and sufficient —
 Using nature that's an art to others,
 Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.
 Ay, of all the artists living, loving,
 None but would forego his proper dowry,—
 Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,—
 Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
 Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
 Once, and only once, and for one only,
 So to be the man and leave the artist,
 Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

70

IX

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
 He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
 Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
 Even he, the minute makes immortal,
 Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
 Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
 While he smites, how can he but remember,
 So he smote before, in such a peril,
 When they stood and mocked — "Shall smiting help us?"
 When they drank and sneered — "A stroke is easy!"
 When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
 Throwing him for thanks — "But drought was pleasant."
 Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
 Thus the doing savours of disrelish;
 Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
 O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
 Carelessness or consciousness — the gesture.
 For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
 Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
 Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
 "How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"

80

90

Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
 “Egypt’s flesh-pots – nay, the drought was better.”

X

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant !
 Theirs, the Sinai-forehead’s cloven brilliance,
 Right-arm’s rod-sweep, tongue’s imperial fiat.
 Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XI

Did he love one face from out the thousands,
 (Were she Jethro’s daughter, white and wifely,
 Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave,)
 He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
 Keeping a reserve of scanty water
 Meant to save his own life in the desert ;
 Ready in the desert to deliver
 (Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
 Hoard and life together for his mistress.

100

XII

I shall never, in the years remaining,
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
 Make you music that should all-express me ;
 So it seems : I stand on my attainment,
 This of verse alone, one life allows me ;
 Verse and nothing else have I to give you
 Other heights in other lives, God willing :
 All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love !

110

XIII

Yet a semblance of resource avails us —
 Shade so finely touched, love’s sense must seize it.

I

Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
 Lines I write the first time and the last time. 120
 He who works in fresco, steals a hairbrush,
 Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
 Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
 Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
 Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
 He who blows through bronze, may breathe through
 silver,
 Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
 He who writes, may write for once as I do.

XIV

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
 Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy, 130
 Enter each and all, and use their service,
 Speak from every mouth,—the speech, a poem.
 Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
 Hope and fears, belief and disbelieving :
 I am mine and yours —the rest be all men's,
 Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
 Let me speak this once in my true person,
 Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
 Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence :
 Pray you, look on these my men and women, 140
 Take and keep my fifty poems finished ;
 Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also !
 Poor the speech ; be how I speak, for all things.

XV

Not but that you know me ! Lo, the moon's self !
 Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
 Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured,
 Curving on a sky imbrued with colour,

Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
 Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
 Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
 Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
 Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
 Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
 Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs
 Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
 Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

150

XVI

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy ?
 Nay : for if that moon could love a mortal,
 Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
 All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos),
 She would turn a new side to her mortal,
 Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
 Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
 Blind to Galileo on his turret,
 Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even !
 Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
 When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
 Opens out anew for worse or better !
 Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
 Swimming full upon the ship it founders ;
 Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals ?
 Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire
 Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain ?
 Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu
 Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
 Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
 Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
 Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
 When they ate and drank and saw God also !

160

170

XVII

What were seen ? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure – the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her !

XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love !
This to you – yourself my moon of poets !
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you !
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you –
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song – and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel - borne, see, on my bosom !

The Last Ride Together

I SAID — Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
 Since now at length my fate I know,
 Since nothing all my love avails,
 Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
 Since this was written and needs must be —
 My whole heart rises up to bless
 Your name in pride and thankfulness !
 Take back the hope you gave, — I claim
 Only a memory of the same,
 — And this beside, if you will not blame,
 Your leave for one move last ride with me.

10

My mistress bent that brow of hers ;
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
 When pity would be softening through,
 Fixed me a breathing-while or two

With life or death in the balance : right !
 The blood replenished me again ;
 My last thought was at least not vain :
 I and my mistress, side by side
 Shall be together, breathe and ride,
 So, one day more am I deified.

20

Who knows but the world may end to-night ?

Hush ! if you saw some western cloud
 All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
 By many benedictions — sun's
 And moon's and evening-star's at once —

And so, you, looking and loving best,
 Conscious grew, your passion drew
 Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
 Down on you, near and yet more near,

30

Till flesh must fade for heaven was here ! —
Thus leant she and lingered — joy and fear !
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry ?
Had I said that, had I done this,
She might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me ? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell !
Where had I been now if the worst befell ?
And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds ?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds ?
We rode ; it seemed, my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,

As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought, — All labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess,
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past !
I hoped she would love me ; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired ?
What heart alike conceived and dared ?
What act proved all its thought had been ?
What will but felt the fleshly screen ?

We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for us who can reach,
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each !

The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing? what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And place them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Then we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy. For me, I ride.

70

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn,
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown grey
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
“Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!”
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

80

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.

90

This foot once planted on the goal,
 This glory-garland round my soul,
 Could I descry such ? Try and test !
 I sink back shuddering from the quest.
 Earth being so good, would heaven seem best ?
 Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
 What if heaven be that, fair and strong
 At life's best, with our eyes upturned
 Whither life's flower is first discerned,
 We, fixed so, ever should so abide ?
 What if we still ride on, we two,
 With life for ever old yet new,
 Changed not in kind but in degree,
 The instant made eternity, —
 And heaven just prove that I and she
 Ride, ride together, for ever ride ?

100

110

A Grammarian's Funeral : Shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,
 Singing together.
 Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
 Each in its tether
 Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
 Cared-for till cock-crow :
 Look out if yonder be not day again
 Rimming the rock-row !
 That's the appropriate country ; there, man's thought,
 Rarer, intenser,
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
 Chafes in the censer.

10

Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop ;
 Seek we sepulture
 On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
 Crowded with culture !
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels ;
 Clouds overcome it ;
 No ! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
 Circling its summit.

20

Thither our path lies ; wind we up the heights ;
 Wait ye the warning ?
 Our low life was the level's and the night's ;
 He's for the morning.
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
 'Ware the beholders !
 This is our master, famous, calm and dead,
 Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd ! sleep, darkling thorpe and
 croft,

Safe from the weather !

30

He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
 Singing together,
 He was a man born with thy face and throat,
 Lyric Apollo !
 Long he lived nameless : how should Spring take note
 Winter would follow ?

Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone !

Cramped and diminished,

Moaned he, " New measures, other feet anon !

My dance is finished ? "

40

No, that's the world's way : (keep the mountain-side,
 Make for the city !)

He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
 Over men's pity ;

Left play for work, and grappled with the world

Bent on escaping :

“What’s in the scroll,” quoth he, “thou keepest
furled ?

Show me their shaping,

Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—

Give ! ”—So, he gowned him,

Straight got by heart that book to its last page :

Learned, we found him.

Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,

Accents uncertain :

“Time to taste life,” another would have said,

“Up with the curtain ! ”

This man said rather, “Actual life comes next ?

Patience a moment !

Grant I have mastered learning’s crabbed text,

Still there’s the comment.

Let me know all ! Prate not of most or least,

Painful or easy !

Even to the crumbs I’d fain eat up the feast,

Ay, nor feel queasy.”

Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,

When he had learned it,

When he had gathered all books had to give !

Sooner, he spurned it.

Image the whole, then execute the parts —

Fancy the fabric

Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,

Ere mortar dab brick !

(Here’s the town-gate reached : there’s the market-place

Gaping before us.)

Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace

(Hearten our chorus !)

50

60

70

That before living he'd learn how to live—

No end to learning :

Earn the means first— God surely will contrive

Use for our earning.

Others mistrust and say, " But time escapes :

Live now or never ! "

He said, " What's time ? Leave Now for dogs and apes !

Man has Forever."

Back to his book then : deeper drooped his head :

Calculus racked him :

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead :

Tussis attacked him.

" Now, master, take a little rest ! " — not he !

(Caution redoubled,

Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly !)

Not a whit troubled,

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,

Fierce as a dragon

He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)

Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,

Heedless of far gain,

Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure

Bad is our bargain !

Was it not great ? did not he throw on God,

(He loves the burthen) —

God's task to make the heavenly period

Perfect the earthen ?

Did not he magnify the mind, show clear

Just what it all meant ?

He would not discount life, as fools do here,

Paid by instalment.

He ventured neck or nothing — heaven's success

Found, or earth's failure :

"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!"

Hence with life's pale lure!"

That low man seeks a little thing to do,

Sees it and does it:

This high man, with a great thing to pursue,

Dies ere he knows it.

That low man goes on adding one to one,

His hundred's soon hit:

This high man, aiming at a million,

Misses an unit.

120

That, has the world here — should he need the next.

Let the world mind him!

This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed

Seeking shall find him.

So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,

Ground he at grammar;

Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:

While he could stammer

He settled *Hoti's* business — let it be! —

Properly based *Oun* —

130

Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,

Dead from the waist down.

Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:

Hail to your purlieus,

All ye highfliers of the feathered race,

Swallows and curlews!

Here's the top-peak; the multitude below

Live, for they can, there:

This man decided not to Live but Know —

Bury this man there?

140

Here — here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,

Lightnings are loosened,

Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,

Peace let the dew send!

Lofty designs must close in like effects :

Loftily lying,

Leave him — still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

The Cry of the Children

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years ?

They are leaning their young heads against their
mothers,

And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,

The young birds are chirping in the nest,

The young fawns are playing with the shadows,

The young flowers are blowing toward the west —

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly !

10

They are weeping in the playtime of the others,

In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow

Why their tears are falling so ?

The old man may weep for his to-morrow

Which is lost in Long Ago ;

The old tree is leafless in the forest,

The old year is ending in the frost,

The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,

The old hope is hardest to be lost :

20

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

Do you ask them why they stand

Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,

In our happy Fatherland ?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
 And their looks are sad to see,
 For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
 Down the cheeks of infancy ;
 " Your old earth," they say, " is very dreary,
 " Our young feet," they say, " are very weak ;
 Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
 Our grave-rest is very far to seek :
 Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,
 For the outside earth is cold,
 And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
 And the graves are for the old."

30

" True," say the children, " it may happen
 That we die before our time :
 Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen
 Like a snowball, in the rime.
 We looked into the pit prepared to take her :
 Was no room for any work in the close clay !
 From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
 Crying, ' Get up, little Alice ! it is day.'
 If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
 With your ear down, little Alice never cries ;
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
 For the smile has time for growing in her eyes :
 And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
 The shroud by the kirk-chime.
 It is good when it happens," say the children,
 " That we die before our time."

40

50

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
 Death in life, as best to have :
 They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
 With a cerement from the grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, at the little thrushes do ;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through ! 60
But they answer, " Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine ?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine !

" For oh," say the children, " we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap ;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go ; 70
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground ;
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

" For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning ;
Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places : 80
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
' O ye wheels ' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
' Stop ! be silent for to-day ! ' "

Ay, be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing
 For a moment, mouth to mouth !
 Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
 Of their tender human youth !
 Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
 Is not all the life God fashions or reveals :
 Let them prove their living souls against the notion
 That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !
 Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
 Grinding life down from its mark ;
 And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
 Spin on blindly in the dark.

90

100

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
 To look up to Him and pray ;
 So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
 Will bless them another day.
 They answer, " Who is God that He should hear us,
 While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?
 When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
 Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
 And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
 Strangers speaking at the door :
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
 Hears our weeping any more ?

110

" Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
 And at midnight's hour of harm,
 ' Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
 We say softly for a charm.
 We know no other words except ' Our Father,'
 And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
 And hold both within His right hand which is strong.

‘ Our father ! ’ If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
‘ Come and rest with me, my child.’

120

“ But, no ! ” say the children, weeping faster,

“ He is speechless as a stone :

And they tell us, of His image is the master

Who commands us to work on.

Go to ! ” say the children — “ up in Heaven,

Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.

130

Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving :

We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.”

Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,

O my brothers, what ye preach ?

For God’s possible is taught by His world’s loving,

And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you !

They are weary ere they run ;

They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory

Which is brighter than the sun.

140

They know the grief of man, without its wisdom ;

They sink in man’s despair, without its calm ;

Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,

Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm :

Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly

The harvest of its memories cannot reap, —

Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.

Let them weep ! let them weep !

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,

And their look is dread to see,

For they mind you of their angels in high places,

With eyes turned on Deity.

150

“How long,” they say, “how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s
heart,—

Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path !
But the child’s sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.”

160

A Child Asleep

How he sleepeth, having drunken
Weary childhood’s mandragore !
From its pretty eyes have sunken
Pleasures to make room for more ;
Sleeping near the withered nosegay which he pulled
the day before.

Nosegays ! leave them for the waking ;
Throw them earthward where they grew ;
Dim are such beside the breaking
Amaranths he looks unto :
Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open ever do. 10

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden
From the palms they sprang beneath,
Now perhaps divinely holden,
Swing against him in a wreath :
We may think so from the quickening of his bloom and of
his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth

While the young child dreameth on :

Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth

With the glory thou hast won !

Darker wast thou in the garden, yestermorn by summer
sun.

20

We should see the spirits ringing

Round thee, were the clouds away :

'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing

In the silent-seeming clay—

Singing ! stars that seem the mutest, go in music all the
way.

As the moths around a taper,

As the bees around a rose,

As the gnats around a vapour,

So the spirits group and close

Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its
repose.

30

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,

Flash their diadems of youth

On the ringlets which half screen thee,

While thou smilest not in sooth

Thy smile, but the overfair one, dropt from some ethereal
mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,

During slumber, shade by shade

To fine down this childish beauty

To the thing it must be made

Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall see it
fade.

40

Softly, softly ! make no noises !
 Now he lieth dead and dumb ;
 Now he hears the angels' voices
 Folding silence in the room :
 Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words as
 they come.

Speak not ! he is consecrated ;
 Breathe no breath across his eyes :
 Lifted up and separated
 On the hand of God he lies
 In a sweetness beyond touching, held in cloistral
 sanctities.

50

Could ye bless him, father—mother,
 Bless the dimple in his cheek ?
 Dare ye look at one another
 And the benediction speak ?
 Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess yourselves
 too weak ?

He is harmless, ye are sinful ;
 Ye are troubled, he, at ease ;
 From his slumber, virtue winful
 Floweth outward with increase.
 Dare not bless him ! but be blessed by his peace, and go
 in peace.

60

The Soul's Expression

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound
 I strive and struggle to deliver right
 That music of my nature, day and night
 With dream and thought and feeling interwound,

And inly answering all the senses round
 With octaves of a mystic depth and height
 Which step out grandly to the infinite
 From the dark edges of the sensual ground.
 This song of soul I struggle to outbear
 Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
 And utter all myself into the air :
 But if I did it, as the thunder-roll
 Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,
 Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

10

TENNYSON

The Lady of Shalott

PART I

ON either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river

c

 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd

20

Skimming down to Camelot ;
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,

The Lady of Shalott ?
Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,

30

Down to tower'd Camelot ;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay

40

To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,

The Lady of Shalott.
And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot ;

50

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

60

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot ;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed :
" I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott

70

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

80

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot ;
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot.

As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river

Sang Sir Lancelot.

100

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.

110

Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
" The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining

120

Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some hold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance

130

Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot ;

140

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
'Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

150

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

160

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,

All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

170

The Lotos-Eaters

“COURAGE !” he said, and pointed toward the land,
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;

And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;

And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land ; far off, three mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush'd ; and, dew'd with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown

In the red West ; thro' mountain clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale ;

A land where all things always seem'd the same !

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,

And taste, to him the gushing of the wave

Far far away did seem to mourn and rave

10

20

30

On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife and slave ; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, " We will return no more ; "
And all at once they sang, " Our island home
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."

40

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

50

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness ?

All things have rest : why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown ;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
" There is no joy but calm ! "
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil ? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence—ripen, fall, and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

90

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With these old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

100

110

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears ; but all hath suffer'd change ;
For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile ;
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
 And eyes grown, dim with gazing on the pilot-stars

120

130

VII

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly,
 How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly —
 With half-dropped eyelid still,
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly —
 His waters from the purple hill —
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine !
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

140

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek ;
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone ;
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
 dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge
 was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
 fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
 For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly
 curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
 world ;

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps
 and fiery sands, 160

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
 and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful
 song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
 wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
 soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;
 Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whisper'd —
 down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and
 oar ;

O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Ulysses

IT little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
 me.

I cannot rest from travel ; I will drink
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

10

Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known, — cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all, —
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met ;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.

20

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
 As tho' to breathe were life ! Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains ; but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things : and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this grey spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

30

L

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle, —
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

40

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail ;
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd and wrought, and thought with
 me, —

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and I are old ;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;
 Death closes all ; but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks ;
 The long day wanes ; the slow moon climbs ; the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down ;
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'

50

60

We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are, —
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

70

In Memoriam

I

Oh, YET we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

10

Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream ; but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night ;
An infant crying for the light ;
And with no language but a cry.

20

2

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,

30

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

40

3

“ So careful of the type ? ” but no.
 From scarped cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, “ A thousand types are gone ;
 I care for nothing, all shall go.”

“ Thou makest thine appeal to me ;
 I bring to life, I bring to death ;
 The spirit does but mean the breath
 I know no more.” And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

50

Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law —
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

60

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,
 That tare each other in their slime,
 Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless !
 What hope of answer, or redress ?
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

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4

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all.

70

O true in word, and tried in deed,
 Demanding, so to bring relief
 To this which is our common grief,
 What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;
 And whether love for him have drain'd
 My capabilities of love ;

80

Your words have virtue such as draws
 A faithful answer from the breast,
 Thro' light reproaches, half expressed,
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
 Till on mine ear this message falls,
 That in Vienna's fatal walls
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there ;

90

And led him through the blissful chimes,
 And show'd him in the fountain fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather to the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
 To wander on a draken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of him.

100

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

110

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might express
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

120

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met ;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch ;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

130

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears ;
 The all-assuming months and years
 Can take no part away from this ;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

140

And every pulse of wind and wave,
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak ;
 " Arise, and get thee forth and seek
 A friendship for the years to come."

" I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
 But in dear words of human speech
 We two communicate no more."

150

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain
 The starry clearness of the free ?
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for me
 Some painless sympathy with pain ?"

And lightly does the whisper fall :
 " 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all."

160

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
 Or so methinks the dead would say ;
 Or so shall grief with symbols play
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
 That those things pass, and I shall prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with love,
 I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.

170

For which be they that hold apart
 The promise of the golden hours ?
 First love, first friendship, equal powers,
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place,
 That yet remembers his embrace,
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

180

My heart, tho' widow'd may not rest
 Quite in the love of what is gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with one
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

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5

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

190

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow.
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

200

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And-ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The taithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

210

Ring out old shapes of foul disease :
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

220

* * * *

6

I will not shut me from my kind,
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,
 I will not eat my heart alone,
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :
 What profit lies in barren faith,
 And vacant yearning, tho' with might
 To scale the heaven's highest height,
 Or dive below the wells of Death ?
 What find I in the highest place,
 But mine own phantom chanting hymns ?
 And on the depths of death there swims
 The reflex of a human face.
 I'll rather take what fruit may be
 Of sorrow under human skies :
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

230

* * * *

7

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
 To him who grasps a golden ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown, —
 The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale ;

240

For who can always act ? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind ;

250

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye,
 Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
 The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

260

* * * * *

8

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill
 To arrive, to fashion, to fulfil—
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

270

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course.

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

280

9

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

290

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain, and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child;

300

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and hour
 In reverence and in charity.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Memorial Verses : April 1850

GOETHE in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
 Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
 But one such death remain'd to come ;
 The last poetic voice is dumb —
 We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
 We bow'd our head and held our breath.
 He taught us little ; by our soul
 Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
 With shivering heart the strife we saw
 Of passion with eternal law ;
 And yet with reverential awe
 We watch'd the fount of fiery life
 Which served for that Titanic strife.

10

When Goethe's death was told, we said :
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.

He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear ;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said : *Thou ailest here, and here.* —
He look'd on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power ;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life—

20

He said : *The end is everywhere,
Art still has truth, take refuge there.*

And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

30

And Wordsworth ! — Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice !
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us — and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we !

40

He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round ;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease :
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again ;

50

Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
 Our youth returned ; for there was shed
 On spirits that had long been dead,
 Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
 The freshness of the early world.

Ah ! since dark days still bring to light
 Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
 Time may restore us in his course
 Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force ;
 But where will Europe's latter hour
 Again find Wordsworth's healing power ?
 Others will teach us how to dare,
 And against fear our breast to steel ;
 Others will strengthen us to bear —
 But who, ah ! who, will make us feel ?
 The cloud of mortal destiny,
 Others will front it fearlessly—
 But who, like him, will put it by ?

65

70

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave ?
 O Rotha, with thy living wave !
 Sing him thy best ! for few or none
 Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

**Thyrsis : A Monody, to commemorate the author's
 friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died at
 Florence, 1861.**

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills !
 In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same ;
 The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
 And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
 And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks —
 Are ye too changed, ye hills ?

See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men

To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays !

Here came I often, often, in old days —

Thyrsis and I ; we still had Thyrsis then.

10

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,

Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns

The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames ?

The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,

The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful

Thames ?—

This winter-eve is warm,

Humid the air ! leafless, yet soft as spring,

The tender purple spray on copse and briars !

And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,

She needs not June for beauty's heightening.

20

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night ! —

Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power

Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.

Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour ;

Now seldom come I, since I came with him.

That single elm-tree bright

Against the west—I miss it ! is it gone ?

We prize it dearly ; while it stood, we said,

Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead ;

While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

30

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,

But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick ;

And with the country-folk acquaintance made

By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.

Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.

Ah me ! this many a year

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday !

Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart

M

Into the world and wave of men depart ;
 But Thyrsis of his own will went away. 40
 It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
 He loved each simple joy the country yields,
 He loved his mates ; but yet he could not keep,
 For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
 Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
 Some life of men unblest
 He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head.
 He went ; his piping took a troubled sound
 Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ;
 He could not wait their passing, he is dead. 50
 So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
 Before the roses and the longest day —
 When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
 With blossoms red and white of fallen May
 And chestnut-flowers are strewn —
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
 From the wet field, through the vext garden
 trees,
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze :
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I ! 60
 Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go ?
 Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
 Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
 And stocks in fragrant blow ;
 Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
 And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
 And the full moon, and the white evening-star. 70

He harkens not ! light comer, he is flown !
 What matters it ? next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
 And scent of hay new-mown,
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see ;
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed —
 For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee !

80

Alack, for Corydon, no rival now !—
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate ;
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
 And relax Pluto's brow,
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
 Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
 Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

90

O easy access to the hearer's grace
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine !
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
 She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
 Each rose with blushing face ;
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
 But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard !
 Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd ;
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain !

100

Well ! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
 Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill !

Who, if not I, for questing here hath power ?

I know the wood which hides the daffodil,

I know the Fyfield tree.

I know what white, what purple fritillaries

The grassy harvest of the river-fields,

Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,

And what sedged brooks are Thames' tributaries ; 110

I know these slopes ; who knows them if not I ? —

But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,

With throns once studded, old, white-blossom'd
trees,

Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried

High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,

Hath since our day put by

The coronals of that forgotten time ;

Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's
team,

And only in the hidden brookside gleam

Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

120

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,

Above the locks, above the boating throng,

Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,

Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among

And darting swallows and light water-gnats,

We track'd the shy Thames shore ?

Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell

Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,

Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass ?—

They all are gone, and thou art gone as well !

130

Yes, thou art gone ! and round me too the night

In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.

I see her veil draw soft across the day,

I feel her slowly chilling breath invade

The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with
grey ;

I feel her finger light

Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train ;—

The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,

The heart less bounding at emotion new,

And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again. 140

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short

To the less practised eye of sanguine youth ;

And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,

The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,

Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare !

Unbreachable the fort

Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall ;

And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,

And near and real the charm of thy repose,

And night as welcome as a friend would fall. 150

But hush ! the upland hath a sudden loss

Of quiet ! — Look, adown the dusk hill-side,

A troop of Oxford hunters going home,

As in old days, jovial and talking, ride ;

From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they
come.

Quick ! let me fly, and cross

Into yon farther field ! — 'Tis done, and see,

Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify

The orange and pale violet evening-sky,

Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree ! the Tree ! 160

I take the omen ! Eve lets down her veil,

The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,

The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,

And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.

I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
 Yet, happy omen, hail !
 Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
 (For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
 The morningless and unawakening sleep
 Under the flowery oleanders pale),

170

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there ! —
 Ah, vain ! These English fields, this upland dim,
 These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
 That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him ;
 To a boon southern country he is fled,
 And now in happier air,
 Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
 (And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
 I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
 Within a folding of the Apennine,

180

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old ! —
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
 In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
 For thee the Lityerses-song again
 Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing ;
 Sings his Sicilian fold,
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
 And how a call celestial round him rang,
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
 And all the marvel of the golden skies.

190

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
 Sole in these fields ! yet will I not despair.
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry
 'Neath the mild canopy of English air
 That lonely tree against the western sky.
 Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,

Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee !
 Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
 Woods with anemones in flower till May,
 Know him a wanderer still ; then why not me ?

200

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illumine ; and I seek it too.
 This does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honour, and a flattering crew ;
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
 But the smooth-slipping weeks
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired ;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone ;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

210

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound ;
 Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour !
 Men gave thee nothing ; but this happy quest,
 If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
 If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
 And this rude Cumner ground,
 Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
 Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
 Here was thine height of strength, thy golden
 prime !
 And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

220

What though the music of thy rustic flute
 Kept not for long its happy, country tone ;
 Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
 Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
 Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy
 throat—
 It fail'd, and thou wast mute !

Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
 And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
 And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
 Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

230

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !
 'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
 Thyrsis ! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
 —Then through the great town's harsh, heart-
 wearying roar,
 Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
 To chase fatigue and fear :
Why faintest thou ! I wander'd till I died.
Roam on ! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof ? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

240

D. G. ROSSETTI

Sister Helen

“ WHY did you melt your waxen man,
 Sister Helen ?

To-day is the third since you began.”

“ The time was long, yet the time ran,
 Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Three days, to-day, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ But if you have done your work aright,
 Sister Helen,

You'll let me play, for you said I might.”

“ Be very still in your play to-night,
 Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven !)

10

“ You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
Sister Helen ;

If now to be molten, all is well.”

“ Even so, — nay, peace ! you cannot tell,
Little brother.”

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
O what is this, between Hell and Heaven ?*)

20

“ Oh the waxen knave was plump to-day,
Sister Helen ;

How like dead folk he has dropped away ! ”

“ Nay now, of the dead what can you say,
Little brother ? ”

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven ?*)

“ See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen,

Shines through the thinned wax red as blood ! ”

“ Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,
Little brother ? ”

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven !*)

30

“ Now close your eyes, for they’re sick and sore,
Sister Helen,

And I’ll play without the gallery door.”

“ Aye, let me rest, — I’ll lie on the floor,
Little brother.”

(*O Mother, Mary Mother,
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven ?*)

40

“ Here high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,

The moon flies face to face with me.”

“ Aye, look and say whatever you see,
 Little brother.”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What sight to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)*

“ Outside it’s merry in the wind’s wake,
 Sister Helen ;
 In the shaken trees the chill stars shake.”
 “ Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
 Little brother ? ”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What sound to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)*

I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
 Sister Helen,
 Three horsemen that ride terribly.”
 “ Little brother, whence come the three,
 Little brother ? ”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven?)*

“ They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
 Sister Helen,
 And one draws nigh, but two are afar.”
 “ Look, look, do you know them who they are,
 Little brother ? ”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven?)*

“ Oh, it’s Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
 Sister Helen,
 For I know the white mane on the blast.”
 “ The hour has come, has come at last,
 Little brother ! ”
*(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven !)*

“ He has made a sign and called Halloo !

Sister Helen,

And he says that he would speak with you. ”

80

“ Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew,

Little brother. ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,

Sister Helen,

That Keith of Ewern’s like to die. ”

“ And he and thou, and thou and I,

Little brother. ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

And they and we, between Hell and Heaven !)

90

“ Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,

Sister Helen,

He sickened, and lies since then forlorn. ”

“ For bridegroom’s side is the bride a thorn,

Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Three days and nights he has lain abed,

Sister Helen,

And he prays in torment to be dead. ”

“ The thing may chance, if he have prayed,

Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven !)

100

“ But he has not ceased to cry to-day,

Sister Helen,

That you should take your curse away. ”

“ My prayer was heard,—he need but pray,
Little brother ! ”

110

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ But he says, till you take back your ban
Sister Helen,

His soul would pass, you never can.”

“ Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ But he calls for ever on your name,
Sister Helen,

120

And says that he melts before a flame.”

“ My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Here’s Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,

For I know the white plume on the blast.”

“ The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little brother ! ”

130

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ He stops to speak, and the stills his horse,
Sister Helen ;

But his words are drowned in the wind’s course ”

“ Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven ?)

140

“ Oh he says that Keith of Ewern’s cry,
 Sister Helen,
 Is ever to see you ere he die.”

“ In all that his soul sees, there am I,
 Little brother ! ”

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,
 The soul’s one sight, between Hell and Heaven !*)

“ He sends a ring and a broken coin,
 Sister Helen,
 And bids you mind the banks of Boyne.”

150

“ What else he broke will he ever join,
 Little brother ? ”

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,
 No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven !*)

“ He yields you these and craves full fain,
 Sister Helen,

You pardon him in his mortal pain,”

“ What else he took will he give again,
 Little brother ? ”

 (*Oh Mother, Mary Mother,
 Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven !*)

160

“ He calls your name in an agony,
 Sister Helen,

The even dead Love must weep to see.”

“ Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
 Little brother ! ”

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven !*)

“ Oh it’s Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
 Sister Helen,

For I know the white hair on the blast.”

170

“ The short, short hour will soon be past,
 Little brother ! ”
 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ He looks at me and he tries to speak,
 Sister Helen,
 But oh ! his voice is sad and weak ! ”
 “ What here should the mighty Baron seek,
 Little brother ? ”

180

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
 Sister Helen,
 The body dies, but the soul shall live.”
 “ Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
 Little brother ! ”

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive,
 Sister Helen,
 To save his dear son's soul alive.”
 “ Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
 Little brother ! ”

190

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
 Sister Helen,
 To go with him for the love of God ! ”
 “ The way is long to his son's abode,
 Little brother.”

200

 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ A lady’s here, by a dark steed brought,

Sister Helen,

So darkly clad, I saw her not.”

“ See her now or never see aught,

Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

What more to see, between Hell and Heaven ?)

210

“ Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,

Sister Helen,

On the Lady of Ewern’s golden hair.”

“ Blest hour of my power and her despair,

Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Hour blest and bann’d, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,

Sister Helen,

’Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago.”

220

“ One morn for pride and three days for woe,

Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head,

Sister Helen ;

With the loud wind’s wail her sobs are wed.”

“ What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,

Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

What strain but death’s, between Hell and Heaven ?)

230

“ She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,

Sister Helen,

She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon.”

“ Oh ! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,
Sister Helen,

And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow.”

“ Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen !

More loud than the vesper-chime it fell.”

“ No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Alas ! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen ;

Is it in the sky or in the ground ? ”

“ Say, have they turned their horses round,
Little brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ They have raised the old man from his knee,
Sister Helen,

And they ride in silence hastily. ”

“ More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven !)

240

250

260

“ Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,

But the lady's dark steed goes alone.”

“ And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown,
Little brother,”

270

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,

And weary sad they look by the hill.”

“ But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven !)

280

“ See, see, the wax has 'dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,

And the flames are winning' up apace ! ”

“ Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Ah ! what white thing at the door has cross'd,
Sister Helen ?

Ah ! what is this that sighs in the frost ? ”

290

“ A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven !)

The Burden of Nineveh

IN our Museum galleries
To-day I lingered o'er the prize
Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes,—
Her Art for ever in fresh wise

From hour to hour rejoicing me.
Sighing I turned at last to win
Once more the London dirt and din ;
And as I made the swing-door spin
And issued, they were hoisting in
A winged beast from Nineveh.

10

A human face the creature wore,
And hoofs behind and hoofs before,
And flanks with dark runes fretted o'er.
'Twas bull, 'twas mitred Minotaur,

A dead disbowelled mystery ;
The mummy of a buried faith
Stark from the charnel without scathe,
Its wings stood for the light to bathe,—
Such fossil cerements as might swathe
The very corpse of Nineveh.

20

The print of its first rush-wrapping,
Wound ere it dried, still ribbed the thing.
What song did the brown maidens sing,
From purple mouths alternating,

When that was woven languidly ?
What vows, what rites, what prayers preferr'd,
What songs has the strange image heard ?
In what blind vigil stood interr'd
For ages, till an English word
Broke silence first at Nineveh ?

30

Oh, when upon each sculptured court,
Where even the wind might not resort, —
O'er which Time passed, of like import
With the wild Arab boys at sport, —

A living face looked in to see : —
Oh seemed it not — the spell once broke —
As though the carven warriors woke,
As though the shaft the string forsook,
The cymbals clashed, the chariots shook,
And there was life in Nineveh ?

40

On London stones our sun anew
The beast's recovered shadow threw.
(No shade that plague of darkness knew,
No light, no shade, while older grew

By ages the old earth and sea.)
Lo thou ! could all thy priests have shown
Such proof to make thy godhead known ?
From their dead Past thou liv'st alone
And still thy shadow is thine own
Even as of yore in Nineveh.

50

That day whereof we keep record,
When near thy city-gates the Lord
Sheltered his Jonah with a gourd.
This sun (I said), here present, pour'd

Even thus this shadow that I see.
This shadow has been shed the same
From sun and moon, — from lamps which came
For prayer, — from fifteen days of flame,
The last, while smouldered to a name
Sardanapalus' Nineveh.

60

Within thy shadow, haply, once
Sennacherib has knelt, whose sons

Smote him between the altar-stones :
Or pale Semiramis her zones
 Of gold, her incense brought to thee,
In love for grace, in war for aid :
Ay, and who else ? . . . : till 'neath thy shade
Within his trenches newly made
Last year the Christian knelt and pray'd —
 Not to thy strength — in Nineveh.

70

Now, thou poor god, within this hall
Where the blank windows blind the wall
From pedestal to pedestal,
The kind of light shall on thee fall
 Which London takes the day to be :
While school-foundations in the act
Of holiday, three files compact,
Shall learn to view thee as a fact
Connected with that zealous tract :
 “ Rome, — Babylon and Nineveh.”

80

Deemed they of this, those worshippers,
When, in some mythic chain of verse
Which man shall not again rehearse,
The faces of thy ministers
 Yearned pale with bitter ecstasy ?
Greece, Egypt, Rome, — did any god
Before whose feet men knelt unshod
Deem that in this unblest abode
Another scarce more unknown god
 Should house with him, from Nineveh ?

90

Ah ! in what quarries lay the stone
From which this pygmy pile has grown,
Unto man's need how long unknown,
Since thy vast temples, court and cone,

Rose far in desert history ?
 Ah ! what is here that does not lie
 All strange to thine awakened eye ?
 Ah ! what is here can testify
 (Save that dumb presence of the sky)
 Unto thy day and Nineveh ?

100

Why, of those mummies in the room
 Above, there might indeed have come
 One out of Egypt to thy home,
 An alien. Nay, but were not some
 Of these thine own " antiquity " ?
 And now, — they and their gods and thou
 All relics here together, — now
 Whose profit ? whether bull or cow,
 Isis or Ibis, who or how,
 Whether of Thebes or Nineveh ?

110

The consecrated metals found,
 And ivory tablets, underground
 Winged teraphim and creatures crown'd
 When air and daylight filled the mound,
 Fell into dust immediately.
 And even as these, the images
 Of awe and worship, — even as these, —
 So, smitten with the sun's increase,
 Her glory mouldered and did cease
 From immemorial Nineveh.

120

The day her builders made their halt,
 Those cities of the lake of salt
 Stood firmly 'stablished without fault,
 Made proud with pillars of basalt,
 With sardonyx and porphyry.

The day that Jonah bore abroad
 To Nineveh the voice of God,
 A brackish lake lay in his road,
 Where erst Pride fixed her sure abode,
 As then in royal Nineveh.

130

The day when he, Pride's lord and Man's,
 Showed all the kingdoms at a glance
 To Him before whose countenance
 The years recede, the years advance,
 And said, Fall down and worship me :—
 'Mid all the pomp beneath that look,
 Then stirred there, haply, some rebuke,
 Where to the wind the salt pools shook,
 And in those tracts, of life forsook,
 That knew thee not, O Nineveh !

140

Delicate harlot ! On thy throne
 Thou with a world beneath thee prone
 In state for ages sat'st alone ;
 And needs were years and lustres flown
 Ere strength of man could vanquish thee :
 Whom even thy victor foes must bring,
 Still royal, among maids that sing
 As with doves' voices, tabouring
 Upon their breasts, unto the King, —
 A kingly conquest, Nineveh !

150

. . . Here woke my thought. The wind's slow sway
 Had waxed ; and like human play
 Of scorn that smiling spreads away,
 The sunshine shivered off the day :
 The callous wind, it seemed to me,
 Swept up the shadow from the ground :
 And pale as whom the Fates astound,

The god forlorn stood winged and crown'd ;
 Within I knew the cry lay bound
 Of the dumb soul of Nineveh.

160

And as I turned, my sense half shut
 Still saw the crowds of kerb and rut
 Go past as marshalled to the strut
 Of ranks in gypsum quaintly cut
 It seemed in one same pageantry
 They followed forms which had been erst ;
 To pass, till on my sight should burst
 That future of the best or worst
 When some may question which was first,
 Of London or of Nineveh.

170

For as that Bull-god once did stand
 And watched the burial-clouds of sand,
 Till these at last without a hand
 Rose o'er his eyes, another land,
 And blinded him with destiny : —
 So may he stand again ; till now,
 In ships of unknown sail and prow,
 Some tribe of the Australian plough
 Bear him afar, — a relic now
 Of London, not of Nineveh !

180

Or it may chance indeed that when
 Man's age is hoary among men, —
 His centuries threescore and ten, —
 His furthest childhood shall seem then
 More clear than later times may be :
 Who, finding in this desert place
 This form, shall hold us for some race
 That walked not in Christ's lowly ways,
 But bowed its pride and vowed its praise
 Unto the god of Nineveh.

190

The smile rose first, — anon drew nigh
 The thought Those heavy wings spread high
 So sure of flight, which do not fly ;
 That set gaze never on the sky ;
 Those scripted flanks it cannot see ;
 Its crown, a brow-contracting load ;
 Its planted feet which trust the sod :
 (So grew the image as I trod :)
 O Nineveh, was this thy God, —
 Thine also, mighty Nineveh ?

200

ROBERT BRIDGES

England to India

BEAUTIFUL is man's home : how fair,
 Wrapt in her robe of azurous air,
 The Earth thro' stress of ice and fire
 Came on the path of God's desire,
 Redeeming Chaos, to compose
 Exquisite forms of lily and rose,
 With every creature a design
 Of loveliness or craft divine
 Searchable and unsearchable,
 And each insect a miracle !

10

Truth is as Beauty unconfined :
 Various as Nature is man's Mind :
 Each race and tribe is as a flower
 Set in God's garden with its dower
 Of special instinct ; and man's grace
 Compact of all must all embrace.
 China and Ind, Hellas of France,
 Each hath its own inheritance ;

And each to Truth's rich market brings
Its bright divine imaginings,
In rival tribute to surprise
The world with native merchandise.

20

Nor least in worth nor last in years
Of artists, poets, saints and seers,
England, in her far northern sea,
Fashion'd the jewel of Liberty,
Fetch'd from the shore of Palestine
(Land of the Lily and mystic Vine).
Where once in the everlasting dawn
Christ's Love-star flamed, that hevaenly sign
Whereto all nations shall be drawn,
Unfabled Magi, and uplift
Each to Love's cradle his own gift.

30

Thou who canst dream and understand,
Dost thou not dream for thine own land
This dream of Truth, and contemplate
That happier world, Love's free Estate?

Say, didst thou dream, O Sister fair,
How hand in hand we entered there?

To The President of the United States of America

SEE England's stalwart daughter, who made emprise
'Gainst her own mother, freeborn of the free,
Who slew her sons for her slaves' liberty,
See for mankind her majesty arise!
From her new world her unattainted eyes
Espy deliverance, and her bold decree
Speaks for Great Britain's wide confederacy:
The folk shall rule, if only they be wise.

Ambition, hate, revenge, the secret sway
 Of priest and kingcraft shall be done away
 By faith in beauty, chivalry and good.
 One God made all, and will all wrongs forgive
 Save their hell-heart who stab man's hope to live
 In mutual freedom, peace and brotherhood.

10

I have loved Flowers that fade

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
 Rich hues have marriage made
 With sweet unmemoried scents :
 A honeymoon delight, —
 A joy of love at sight,
 That ages in an hour : —
 My song be like a flower !

I have loved airs, that die
 Before their charm is writ
 Along a liquid sky
 Trembling to welcome it.
 Notes, that with pulse of fire
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,
 Then die, and are nowhere : —
 My song be like an air !

10

Die, song, die like a breath,
 And wither as a bloom :
 Fear not a flowery death,
 Dread not an airy tomb !
 Fly with delight, fly hence !
 'Twas thine love's tender sense
 To feast ; now on thy bier
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

20

Indolence

WE left the city when the summer day
Had verged already on its hot decline,
And charmed Indolence in languor lay
In her gay garden, 'neath her towers divine :
“ Farewell,” we said, “ dear city of youth and dream ! ”
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed
Upon our proposed travel well begun,
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,
Past shallow islets floating in the sun,
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

10

Till when the loveliest came, which mowers home
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam,
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass
Of water, that in swirl thereunder, flowed,
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass ;
And pulling for the middle span, we drew
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

20

But past the bridge what change we found below !
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,
And with its easy flood no murmur made :
And weeds spread on its surface, and about
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out.

30

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove :
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank,
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean ;
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green ;
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

40

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs
All windowless, neglected and awry,
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks ;
And here and there an unused door, set high
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,
With empty boats and barges moored along,
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

50

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more ;
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,
Between the dim reflections floating by.

60

RUPERT BROOKE

Peace

NOW, God be thanked Who has matched us with His
hour,

And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,

To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,
Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,

Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
And all the little emptiness of love !

Oh ! we, who have known shame, we have found release
there,

Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,

Naught broken save this body, lost but breath ; II
Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there

But only agony, and that has ending ;

And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

Safety

DEAR ! of all happy in the hour, most blest

He who has found our hid security,

Assured in the dark tides of the world at rest,

And heard our word, " Who is so safe as we ? "

We have found safety with all things undying,

The winds, and morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,

And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.

We have built a house that is not for Time's throwing.

We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever. IO
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,

Secretly armed against all death's endeavour ;

Safe though all safety's lost ; safe where men fall ;
And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

The Dead

BLOW out, you bugles, over the rich Dead !
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away ; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth : gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhopèd serene,
That men call age ; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow ! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage ;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again,
And we have come into our heritage.

10

The Dead, II.

THESE hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years have given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music ; known
Slumber and waking ; loved ; gone proudly friendèd ;
Felt the quick stir of wonder ; sat alone ;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,

10

Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

The Soldier

IF I should die, think only this of me :
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed ;
And dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less 10
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given ;
Her sights and sounds ; dreams happy as her day ;
And laughter, learnt of friends ; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

One Day

TO-DAY I have been happy. All the day
I held the memory of you, and wove
Its laughter with the dancing light o' the spray,
And sowed the sky with tiny clouds of love,
And sent you following the white waves of sea,
And crowned your head with fancies, nothing worth,
Stray buds from that old dust of misery,
Being glad with a new foolish quiet mirth.

So lightly I played with those dark memories,
Just as a child, beneath the summer skies,

10

Plays hour by hour with a strange shining stone,
For which (he knows not) towns were fire of old,
And love has been betrayed, and murder done,
And great kings turned to a little bitter mould.

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